



Irish Heart
Foundation

Move More

Walking Challenge



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

Building a
Better Health
Service



How does the challenge work?

The aim of the **Move More Walking Challenge** is to empower you to gradually increase your physical activity level over 6 weeks. By the end of the challenge you will be achieving the National Physical Activity Guidelines and will have embraced regular movement as a healthy lifestyle habit.

What are the National Physical Activity Guidelines?

For health, adults should engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity, 5 days a week and should also include muscle-strengthening exercises 2-3 times a week. Older adults should also include some balance activities. Over the 6 week challenge all components of the guidelines will be incorporated.

Irish Heart Foundation

The Irish Heart Foundation is Ireland's national charity fighting heart disease and stroke through advocacy, research, prevention and care. For more information visit www.irishheart.ie.

parkrun Ireland

The Irish Heart Foundation is teaming up with parkrun Ireland to encourage more people to join the parkrun Community. The free 5km events take place nationally every Saturday at 9.30am. parkrun encourages walkers to take part at their own pace and enjoy these fun, social opportunities to get active.

The Move More Walking Challenge will encourage you to register and walk in a parkrun event but don't worry if you don't have an event near you, any 5km event will be a great target to work towards. Depending on your fitness level you may already be able to complete 5km or you might like to use the 6-week challenge to build up your aerobic fitness level and confidence.

Prep Step!

Keeping track of your steps can be a great way to check how active you currently are and allow you record any increase in your activity levels. 10,000 is the recommended number of steps to take in a day which is approximately 8km. However; all steps count not just those you accumulate on a walk.

The challenge will ask you to track your steps so before you begin source your step counter of choice. Most smart phones have a built-in step counter app, or you can download one for free, you can use a wearable tracking device or a simple step counter.

Movement – Start tracking and recording your steps

Aim to increase your step count each day over the 6 weeks until you are reaching 10,000 steps a day. Remember all steps count so make them part of your daily routine:

- Get off the bus a stop early
- Park at the back of the car park
- Take the stairs instead of the lift

Activity – Walk for 3 × 1km & 2 × 3km walks

- It should take 10-15mins to walk 1km depending on your fitness level
- You can substitute walking for any aerobic activity of choice throughout the 6 weeks

Challenge – Warm-up

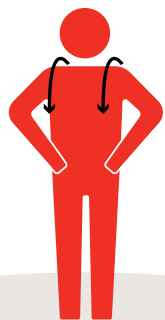
Warming up before we exercise prepares our body for activity and prevents injury by:

- Warming and loosening muscles
- Stimulates synovial fluid to 'oil' the joints
- Gradually increases body temperature and heart rate

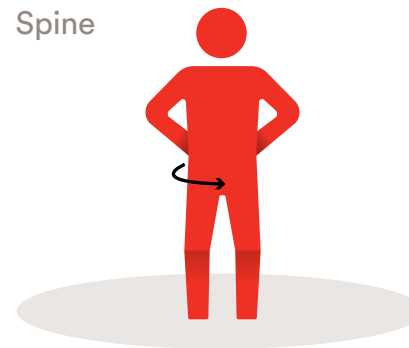
The images below and on the next page outline a simple warm up routine. Videos of the exercises can be found on www.irishheart.ie/sli.

For each exercise:

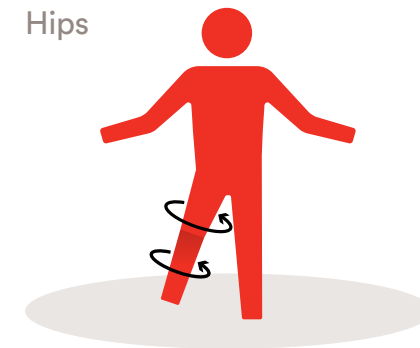
- Mobilise slowly and gently with no jerking or snapping movements
- Start with small movements and increase as you warm up
- Repeat 8 – 10 times

**Shoulders**

- Place hands on hips and circle the shoulders forward
- Repeat in a backwards movement

Spine

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart and soften the knees slightly
- Rotate the spine by turning your upper body to the right and then to the left
- Start with small turns
- Increase to larger twists, looking behind you as you turn

Hips

- Raise one leg slightly off the ground
- Rotate the whole leg from the hip in a circular movement
- Repeat on the other leg

Knees

- Raise the heel of one foot towards the buttocks and lower
- Repeat on the other leg

Ankles

- Lift one foot slightly off the ground
- Rotate the ankle in a circular movement clockwise, then counter clockwise
- Repeat with other ankle

**CHALLENGE – parkwalk at parkrun!**

Checkout www.parkrun.ie to find out more about the parkrun initiative and find your nearest parkrun route.

Movement – Keep tracking your steps

- Aim to improve on last week's average
- Try stepping on the spot while you wait for the kettle boil

Activity – Walk for 2 × 1km & 3 × 2km walks

- Include the warm up from last week before each walk
- Vary the time of day you walk; can you get out for a walk on your lunch break?

Challenge – Warm down

Warming down after we exercise allows the heart rate and body temperature to gradually reduce and helps prevent stiff, sore muscles.

The images below and on the next page outline a simple warm down routine which can be performed in a seated and standing position. Videos of the exercises can be found on www.irishheart.ie/sli.

**For each exercise:**

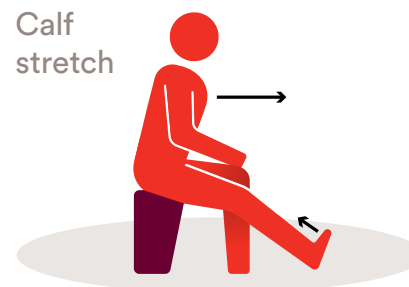
- Ease slowly to the point of mild tension and hold
- Do not bounce or jerk
- Hold for 10 seconds and repeat up to 3 times
- Breathe through the stretch
- Start by sitting upright at the front edge of seat – feet forward and apart.

Hamstring stretch

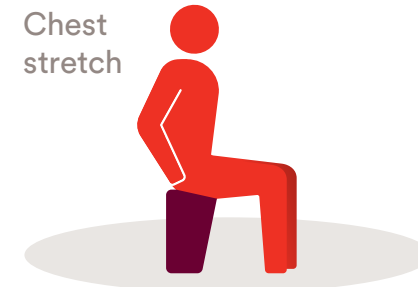
- Place right heel forward
- Place hands on the left (opposite) thigh
- Lean forward with back straight and head up until slight tension is felt in right hamstring
- Repeat on other leg

Back stretch

- Raise arms to shoulder level and clasp hands with palms facing forward
- Lean forward and push palms forward
- Lower chin to chest to feel tension along upper back and shoulders

Calf stretch

- Place right foot forward and slide heel forward and pull toes towards you
- Place hands on left (opposite) thigh
- Lean forward with back straight and head up until slight tension is felt in right calf
- Repeat on other leg

Chest stretch

- Place palms on lower back
- Ease elbows backwards – imagine trying to tip them together
- Push chest forward to feel tension in upper chest and shoulders

**CHALLENGE – parkwalk at parkrun!**

Challenge your friends, family or work colleagues to join you at a parkrun event at the end of your 6 week challenge.

Movement – Keep tracking your steps

- Aim to improve on last week's average
- Remember the goal is to achieve 10,000 a day or average 70,000 steps a week

Activity – Walk for 1 × 1km, 3 × 2km & 1 × 3km walks

- Include the warm up and warm down routine at the beginning and end of each session

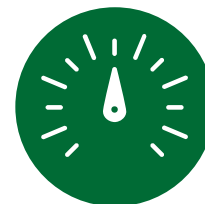
Challenge – Up the intensity

The physical activity guidelines state we should do at least 30 mins of 'moderate intensity activity' 5 days a week.

The more activity we do, the fitter we get so we need to increase the amount of work we do to ensure we are still achieving moderate intensity.

There are some signs our bodies use to tell us when we are at moderate intensity:

- We feel a bit warmer but are not sweating profusely
- We can feel our heart beating a bit faster but it's not pounding
- We can still talk but we need to take a few deep breaths and the conversation slows down

*Some simple ways to up the intensity include:*

Increase your pace; walk for 3 minutes followed by 1 minute of faster walking, repeat for the duration of your walk, finishing up with a slow pace.



Add an incline such as a hill or steps.



Engage your arms as you walk. Roll your shoulders up, back and down to ensure your arms are by your side, then as you walk concentrate on increasing both your forward and backward swing.

Check out the video of how to improve your walking posture and engage your arms as you walk on www.irishheart.ie/sli

**CHALLENGE – parkwalk at parkrun!**

Register with parkrun at www.parkrun.ie under the running group '#IrishHearts' and print your barcode. Remind your walking buddies to do the same.



Movement – Keep tracking your steps

- Aim to improve on last week's average
- Get creative and think of new ways to add more steps into your day

Activity – Walk for 2 × 2km, 2 × 3km & 1 × 4km walks

- Are you still including a warm up and warm down, if not refresh your memory with the videos on www.irishheart.ie/sli
- Add in some bursts of moderate intensity activity like upping the pace, engaging your arms or adding in an incline

Challenge – Introduce some muscle strengthening activity

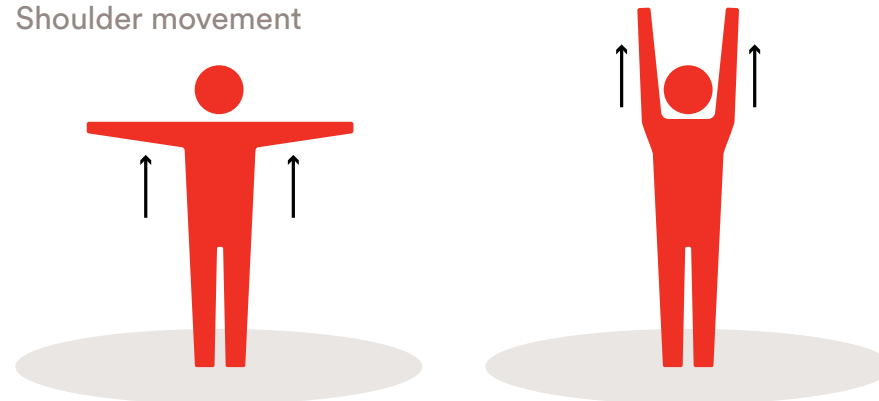
According to the guidelines, adults should include muscle strengthening activities 2-3 times per week. On the next page are a few simple exercises that target your major muscle groups. Check out the videos on our website for detailed instructions www.irishheart.ie/sli.

Squat



- Stand tall, feet hip-width apart
- Looking forward, lower buttocks to a seated position
- Rise to a standing position
- You should be able to see your toes throughout the movement

Shoulder movement



- Stand tall with both arms by your side, palms facing in
- Raise arms to shoulder level, bend elbows slightly and face palms to the sky
- Push both arms up to full height, straight above head
- Lower to shoulders, then back to side



CHALLENGE – parkwalk at parkrun!

Have you read this week's parkrun newsletter? Each week parkrun will send you an email of all the recent parkrun news.



Movement – Keep tracking your steps

- As you come to the end of the challenge you should be nearing the 10,000 steps a day goal.
- If you are not quite there yet focus on increasing your daily step count by 500 steps a day, each day this week.

Activity – Walk 2 × 3km & 3 × 4km walks

- Remember to include the warm up and stretch at the beginning and end of each activity
- Add in a burst of moderate intensity movement as you walk
- Practice your muscle strengthening activity either before, during or after you walk

Challenge – Challenge your balance

- Balance challenges help maintain our balance and stability as we age
- Older adults are recommended to include balance activity weekly, but all adults will benefit from a balance challenge

Check out the simple activities on the next page or www.irishheart.ie/sli for detailed videos.

Tight rope walking



- Walk forward placing heel to toe as if on a tightrope
- To make it more challenging you could try stepping very slowly, walk backwards or lift the lead knee high before placing the foot down

Standing on one foot



- Raise one leg up and balance on the other foot
- Count how long you can balance
- Use your arms to help you balance if you need to
- You can make it even more challenging by closing your eyes.
- Switch to the other leg and repeat.



CHALLENGE – parkwalk at parkrun!

Check out your planned Parkwalk route in advance of next week's event and enjoy a leisurely 5km stroll.

Movement – Congratulations on tracking your steps for 6 weeks!

- Keep it going for the week ahead
- As the week ends look back at your step count from week 1 to see your progress

Activity – Walk 2 × 3km, 2 × 4km & 1 × 5km walks

- Put all the challenge elements you have learnt into practice this week
- Warm up
- Include moderate intensity bursts
- Practice your muscle strengthening exercises 2-3 times per week
- Challenge your balance
- Warm down after all that activity

Challenge – Keep Going!

Congratulations on reaching week 6 of the challenge! Your challenge this week is to incorporate all the new exercises and healthy habits you have learnt over the past 5 weeks to achieve the National Physical Activity Guidelines.

After completing the 6 week challenge you should have made physical activity part of your daily routine.

Keep challenging yourself as you get fitter to ensure you are continuing to reach the moderate intensity goal.

AVERAGE WEEKLY STEP COUNT:



CHALLENGE – parkwalk at parkrun!

Attend the 5km parkrun event this Saturday at 9.30am. Don't forget to bring your barcode along to receive your completion time.



Good luck!



Irish Heart Foundation

Irish Heart Foundation
17-18 Rathmines Road Lower,
Dublin 6, D06C780.

Phone: +353 1 668 5001
Email: info@irishheart.ie
Web: www.irishheart.ie

Follow us on



Charity Number CHY 5507